

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05 L-01  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PM-03 PA-01 PRS-01 IO-06 ACDA-10  
/051 W

-----058067 051018Z /13

P R 050900Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5789  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0222

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: MOPS, ET, SO  
SUBJECT: OBSERVER SEES OGADEN FRONT STATIC; EXPECTS EGYPTIAN  
ADVISORS SOON

REFS: (A) MOGADISCIO 0218 AND (B) MOGADISCIO 0219

1. IN LIGHT OF THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO THE CHARGE AND THE  
AMBASSADOR ON FEB 2 AND 4, DCM PRESSED EGYPTIAN MILITARY  
ATTACHE COL AHMED MOHMOUD ABDEL-HALIM ON THE EVENING OF FEB  
4 FOR HIS EVALUATION OF THE MILITARY SITUATION. HALIM SAID  
THE HARAR/DIRE DAWA FRONT IS STILL STATIC. HE REPORTED THE  
SOMALIS HAVE SUFFERED MODERATE CASUALTIES IN TURNING BACK  
LOCAL ETHIOPIAN ATTACKS, BUT HE ADDED THAT THE SOMALIS WERE  
HAVING NO REAL TROUBLE IN MAINTAINING A STEADY FLOW OF REPLACE-  
MENTS. HALIM SAID THE MORALE OF THE SOMALI FORCES REMAINED  
GOOD. HE THOUGHT THAT THE SOMALI FORCES WERE MORE SOBER NOW  
THAN EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN, BUT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY MARKED  
DETERIORATION IN SOMALI MORALE. HALIM ADDED THAT THE  
AIR ATTACKS ON SOMALI FORCES WERE CERTAINLY TROUBLESOME,  
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AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE OVERALL SERIOUSNESS OF THE  
SITUATION, BUT HE DID NOT THINK THE AIR ARM ALONE WOULD BE  
DECISIVE.

2. TURNING TO ONE OF HIS FAVORITE THEMES, HALIM SAID THE  
ONE GLARING FAULT IN THE SOMALI COMMAND STRUCTURE WAS  
STAFF WORK. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE OPERATIONAL COMMAND

HEADQUARTERS IN HARGESIA FUNCTIONED ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS WITH NO ADVANCE PLANNING FOR THE SUPPLY OF AMMUNITION, MEN, RATIONS, OR POL TO THE FIGHTING FRONT. IN TURN, HE SAID, THE REPORTS FROM OPERATIONAL COMMAND HARGESIA TO MOGADISCIO WERE ALL TOO OFTEN FRAGMENTARY, AND PRESENT OFTEN AN INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE PICTURE. HE CHARGED THAT THEIR SOVIET TUTORS HAD DELIBERATELY LEFT THE SOMALIS LACKING IN ADEQUATE STAFF DOCTRINE AND PROCEDURES.

3. TO MEET THIS SHORTCOMING, HALIM CONTINUED, THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE PROVIDING CERTAIN TECHNICAL EXPERTS AND STAFF-TRAINED OFFICERS TO THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY. HALIM DID NOT SAY WHEN THESE SPECIALISTS WERE EXPECTED, BUT HE ADDED HE HOPED IT WOULD BE SOON.

4. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION ON THE SAME DATE THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR AND COUNSELLOR REPORTED THAT THEY HAVE LEARNED FROM THEIR CONTACTS IN THE ITALIAN MEDICAL COMMUNITY THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 400 NEUROLOGICAL CASUALTIES FROM THE OGADEN FIGHTING IN MOGADISCIO HOSPITALS. PROJECTING ON THAT BASIS, IT WAS THEIR ESTIMATE, CONCURRED IN BY THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE, THAT THERE ARE PROBABLY MORE THAN 4,000 SOMALI CASUALTIES FROM THE OGADEN FIGHTING. THE ITALIAN MEDICAL PEOPLE HAVE NOT NOTED A MARKED INFLUX OF NEW CASES IN THE LAST DAYS.

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5. COMMENT: TAKING THESE FRAGMENTS TOGETHER WITH THE SONNA RELEASES, TID-BITS GLEANED BY THE WESTERN PRESS, AND OTHER INDICATIONS AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN SOME INTENSIFICATION OF THE FIGHTING ON THE CRITICAL HARAR/DIRE DAWA FRONT, THAT THE SOMALI FORCES ARE TAKING MUCH MORE PUNISHMENT FROM THE AIR THAN BEFORE, AND THAT APPREHENSION AT THE GSDR COMMAND AND POLITICAL LEVEL IS ON THE INCREASE. FROM THE MOMENT SOMALI FORCES ARE HOLDING. HOW LONG THEY CAN CONTINUE TO DO SO REMAINS MOOT.  
LOUGHRAN

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## Message Attributes

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